

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

To maintain and increase access to the Bronx County Surrogate's Court while taking all appropriate measures to combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the following procedures and protocols have been implemented, effective immediately.

**NO PUBLIC ENTRY.** Except under extraordinary circumstances, neither attorneys nor the general public shall be permitted to enter our courtroom or administrative offices.

**OPERATIONS.** All Departments are working daily to process new and existing matters. Operations will be conducted by a limited in-person staff and remotely. Please note that delays in the processing of matters will be unavoidable.

**COMMUNICATIONS.** Departments can be contacted by mail, telephone or dropping off written communications in the bin marked "Surrogate's Court" located at the Grand Concourse entrance of the courthouse.

Mailings are to be addressed to the Bronx Surrogate's Court, 851 Grand Concourse, Room 317, Bronx, New York 10451. You can leave a voicemail with a Department either by using the Court's main number (718) 618-2300 and then selecting the appropriate prompt, or by dialing the Department's direct line, which is shown on this page.

All communications with the Court must include your contact information, INCLUDING YOUR CURRENT HOME/OFFICE ADDRESS, E-MAIL ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER. You will not receive a response if you do not provide the Court with such updated contact information.

**TYPES OF CASES BEING DETERMINED.** The Court will process and determine all uncontested matters (in which waivers and consents have been fully executed and for which no citation need be issued). Priority will be given to contested matters on a case-by-case basis. Parties with urgent matters may contact the Department in which the case will be filed. Parties in need of immediate Court assistance may contact also the court attorney-referee to whom the matter has been assigned, if any.

**FILING PAPERS WITH THE COURT.** All types of petitions, motions and documents are being accepted for filing. Papers may be filed by mail (USPS or any express mail service) or by dropping them off in the Surrogate's Court bin located at the Grand Concourse entrance. Papers may also be filed using the New York State Court's Electronic Filing System ("NYSCEF"). For more information regarding NYSCEF, you can click on the grey tab marked "E-Filing" on the left side of this page or visit the NYSCEF website at [www.nycourts.gov/efile](http://www.nycourts.gov/efile). **NOTE: Filings through NYSCEF will not be processed unless they are accompanied by a completed "Request For Surrogate's Action" form.**

Filed papers will be reviewed by the Court staff in the order in which they are received but not necessarily on the same date that they are filed. Court personnel may contact petitioners or their counsel as needed once filed papers are reviewed.

All communications with the Court must include your contact information, **INCLUDING YOUR CURRENT HOME/OFFICE ADDRESS, E-MAIL ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER.** You will not receive a response if you do not provide the Court with such updated contact information.

Filers requesting any documents must provide the court with self-addressed stamped envelopes bearing adequate postage for the return. **The Court will not mail documents back to the filer without such properly stamped envelopes.**

**VIRTUAL AND REMOTE APPEARANCES:** Unless otherwise ordered, all cases, hearings, conferences, motions and proceedings will be conducted virtually using means such as videoconferencing, joint telephone calls and the like.

**CITATIONS AND OTHER PROCESS.** The Court is now issuing citations or orders to show cause (as process) for virtual appearances in cases that were scheduled to be heard originally in March, April, May and June 2020. These cases will be heard starting in September.

**THERE WILL BE NO CALENDAR CALLS OR APPEARANCES PERMITTED IN THE COURTHOUSE ON THE RETURN DATE LISTED ON THE CITATION.**

For those served with a citation for a virtual appearance:

- **If you do not object** to the relief requested, you do not need to contact the Court. **If you object** to the relief requested by the citation, you must respond to the Court **in writing** so that the Court receives your response at least three (3) business days before the date listed on the citation. You may respond in writing by e-mail [VirtualBronxSurrogatesCourt@nycourts.gov](mailto:VirtualBronxSurrogatesCourt@nycourts.gov) or by mail to the Court address listed above. **Your written response must include an e-mail address and/or a telephone number by which you can be reached during normal business hours. If the Court does not hear from you by the citation's return date, it will be presumed that you do not object to the Court granting the relief requested in this matter.**
- If you or your attorney notifies the Court in writing that you object, the Court will mark the matter as "contested." If you hired an attorney to appear on your behalf, the attorney should file a notice of appearance with the Court, using the Court's e-filing system (NYSCEF) or by mail. After receiving notice that the matter will be contested, the Court will schedule a Skype or telephone conference and notify the parties of the virtual (remote) conference date.

**THE HELP CENTER.** Unrepresented parties who have questions about Court procedures or policies may contact our Help Center by calling 718-618-1722 and 718-618-1744 (a dedicated Spanish line) or by email at [bxsurhelpctr@nycourts.gov](mailto:bxsurhelpctr@nycourts.gov). For more information regarding our Help Center, you can click on the grey tab marked “Help Center” on the left side of this page.

**MEDIATION.** The Court, on its own initiative, shall refer certain new and pending matters to mediation. With the Court’s consent, parties may also elect to attempt to resolve their matters through mediation. Mediations are conducted virtually and will occur within forty-five days from the date they are referred to mediation by the Court. For more information regarding the Court’s mediation program, you can click on the grey tab marked “ADR” on the left side of this page.

**The terms of this notice are subject to modification as the need arises**

More information about the New York State Unified Court System’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic may be found here: <https://www.nycourts.gov/index.shtml>